

Oaks, PA— To recognize the service the Oaks Fire Company has provided to Upper Providence and surrounding municipalities for the last century, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) presented a Congressional Citation to Joe LoCasale, president of the all-volunteer organization. The Congressman spoke about his admiration of the men and women who have chosen to serve in this dangerous profession. —

“As a nation, we owe a debt of gratitude to our first responders, courageous individuals who have put selflessly chosen to put community before self,” said Congressman Sestak. “It is a testament not only to character of the individuals who join this company, but also the families who raise them and the community members who support them that this station has continued to serve Oaks so well for the last hundred years.”

The Congressman also spoke about one his major efforts in Washington to honor our nation’s first responders, including the hundreds of thousands of men and women who serve as volunteer firefighters, Congressman Sestak cosponsored the Supporting Emergency Responders Volunteers Efforts (SERVE) Act as another important way to ensure that volunteer firefighters, who represent approximately 75 percent of the nation’s firefighters and make up all of the Oaks Department, are able to serve their community to the best of their ability. Providing a \$1000 tax credit can serve as an important recruitment tool for local groups and can help offset the cost of the many calls and training sessions that volunteers attend on their own time and at their own expense.

“As route 422 has become a major transportation and commercial artery, the scope and scale of the Oaks Fire Company’s responsibilities have increased dramatically; however, so to has the volunteer spirit of this community,” said the Congressman in his citation. “Oaks 63 has established a reputation as one of the most capable organizations of its kind in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. It gives me great pleasure to honor all who serve and have served in this extraordinary fire company and wish you a second century of excellence in service.”

In addition to supporting the SERVE Act, the Congressman has cosponsored bipartisan legislation to provide tax relief for volunteer first responders. The legislation, the Volunteer Firefighter's Tax Incentive Protection Act (H.R. 943), would allow state and local governments the flexibility to develop beneficial tax incentives, including property tax abatements, retirement awards, death benefits, health benefits, and state income tax credits, for encouraging recruitment and retention for volunteer firefighters and emergency medical personnel.

Furthermore, the Congressman has hosted a First Responders Grants and Appropriations Seminar to inform individuals involved with emergency services in his District about opportunities to seek funding at the state and federal level for projects.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "Deep Blue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

###